

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the first paragraph on page 11 with the following amended paragraph:

Fig.1 is a vertical sectional view schematically showing an apparatus for producing a composite material including ceramic hollow particles and aluminum or aluminum alloy according to the invention; and

Fig.2 is a perspective view showing an example of a member (or the composite material including the ceramic hollow particles and aluminum or aluminum alloy) produced by the production apparatus (production method) according to the invention; and

Fig. 3 is a vertical sectional view showing a vent member and an anti-leakage ceramic filter disposed in the vent member.

Please replace the junction paragraph between pages 11 and 12 with the following amended paragraph:

The vent hole 63 is provided with a metallic vent member 63a, and an anti-leakage ceramic filter 63c disposed in the vent member 63a in a manner to cover the ~~air vent 63b~~air vent ~~63b~~63c for preventing the leakage of the molten stock. An upper side of the vent member 63a, that faces the slit 62, is formed with a plurality of grooves ~~(not shown)~~63d. The anti-leakage ceramic filter 63c, shown in Fig. 3 with metallic vent member 63a and plurality of grooves 63d, may be formed from one type of ceramic material or from plural types of ceramic materials (ceramics).

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
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However, it is preferred that the ceramic filter has characteristics to permit the passage of the air caused to flow out of the slit 62 by the pressure of the Ar gas and to inhibit the passage (permeation) of the molten aluminum 40 or the molten aluminum alloy 40 therethrough.